

is in the southern Peloponnese, and the Peloponnese has been particularly hard hit by these fires.

And as we walked the paths of her childhood, I remember that she was looking for one particular olive tree that she remembered not from 30 years prior but from 60 years before that she played under as a small child. It was a touchstone of her childhood and of her memories, and it made an incredible impression on me, the love, the connection that she had to this village and to that land.

Today, for many Greeks and for many Greek Americans, these touchstones, these sacred markers have gone up in flames. Beyond this, the loss of life is tragic. For these reasons, Americans all across this country are moved to reach out to the citizens of Greece.

Madam Speaker, the spirit of the Greek people is indomitable. It will triumph over this tragedy, and with this resolution, America signifies that it stands with Greece and its people in this hour of need.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield such time as he may consume to my colleague and good friend, the gentleman from New Jersey (Mr. PAYNE), a senior member of the House Foreign Affairs Committee.

Mr. PAYNE. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of H. Res. 629 and extend my condolences and sympathy to the people and the Government of Greece for the grave loss of life and vast destruction caused by the raging fires that destroyed the homes, villages, farms, livestock, but not the spirit, of the country.

Since June of this year, the people and the Government of Greece have been battling forest fires due to extensive heat and lack of rain. An estimated 495,000 acres of mostly forest and farmland have been destroyed, the worst damage since the 1950s.

Today I stand with my colleagues, Chairman FALEOMAVAEGA and the ranking member, to avow close support and solidarity to a close friend, a strategic partner and a longstanding ally in this painful and difficult hour.

I applaud the administration's initiative to provide assistance and relief to the people of Greece, including its pledge of \$1.5 million in aid, as well as expert and technical assistance. I have confidence that Greece and its people will succeed in overcoming the hardship incurred through this tragedy.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I have no further requests for time, and I thank the gentleman for his remarks, and I thank the honored guests who are with us today. We grieve for the people today, and we stand with them in this time of sorrow ready to help.

With that, I yield back the balance of our time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I also want to commend and thank my good friend, the senior ranking member of our committee, for her support and her assistance in managing

this legislation, and I want to thank my colleague from Maryland for his most eloquent and moving speech this morning to share with our colleagues in the House the tragedy facing the good people of Greece, and I sincerely hope that we will support this legislation.

Madam Speaker, I have no further speakers, and I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and agree to the resolution, H. Res. 629.

The question was taken.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. In the opinion of the Chair, two-thirds being in the affirmative, the ayes have it.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, on that I demand the yeas and nays.

The yeas and nays were ordered.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to clause 8 of rule XX and the Chair's prior announcement, further proceedings on this motion will be postponed.

□ 1045

#### PACIFIC ISLAND ECONOMIC AND EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the bill (H.R. 3062) to authorize appropriations to provide for South Pacific exchanges, provide technical and other assistance to countries in the Pacific region through the United States Agency for International Development, and authorize appropriations to provide Fulbright Scholarships for Pacific Island students, as amended.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The text of the bill is as follows:

H.R. 3062

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007".

#### SEC. 2. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY EXCHANGES.

There is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State \$1,000,000 for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009 for exchanges with Pacific Island countries carried out under the educational and cultural exchange programs of the Department of State.

#### SEC. 3. USAID IN PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES.

The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) is authorized, upon request by the government of a Pacific Island country, to provide to such government technical and other assistance.

#### SEC. 4. J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.

(a) FINDINGS.—Congress finds the following:

(1) From 1949 until 2003, the Department of State awarded 13,176 Fulbright Scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but only 31 Fulbright Scholarships went to students from Pacific Island countries.

(2) In the 2003–2004 academic year, the Department of State awarded 315 scholarships to students from East Asia and the Pacific, but none were awarded to students from Pacific Island countries.

(b) REVIEW AND REPORT.—The Secretary of State shall conduct a review and submit to the Committee on Foreign Affairs of the House of Representatives and the Committee on Foreign Relations of the Senate a report regarding the marginalization of students from Pacific Island countries in the awarding of Fulbright Scholarships.

#### (c) PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS FROM PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRIES IN THE J. FULBRIGHT EDUCATIONAL EXCHANGE PROGRAM.—

(1) ESTABLISHMENT.—The Secretary of State shall establish a program within the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program (established under section 112(a)(1) of the Mutual Educational and Cultural Exchange Act of 1961 (22 U.S.C. 2460(a)(1)), commonly referred to as the Fulbright-Hays Act) to make awards to students from Pacific Island countries to permit such students to study in the United States pursuant to the terms and conditions of such Exchange Program.

(2) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—In addition to amounts that are otherwise authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary of State for fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to provide awards under the J. William Fulbright Educational Exchange Program, there is authorized to be appropriated to the Secretary \$500,000 for each of such fiscal years to provide such awards to students from Pacific Island countries.

#### SEC. 5. PACIFIC ISLAND COUNTRY DEFINED.

In this Act, the terms "Pacific Island country" and "Pacific Island countries" mean any of the following countries:

- (1) The Cook Islands.
- (2) The Federated States of Micronesia.
- (3) The Independent State of Samoa.
- (4) The Kingdom of Tonga.
- (5) Niue.
- (6) Papua New Guinea.
- (7) The Republic of Fiji.
- (8) The Republic of Kiribati.
- (9) The Republic of the Marshall Islands.
- (10) The Republic of Nauru.
- (11) The Republic of Palau.
- (12) The Republic of Vanuatu.
- (13) The Solomon Islands.
- (14) Tuvalu.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to the rule, the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) and the gentlewoman from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) each will control 20 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentleman from American Samoa.

#### GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on the bill under consideration.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from American Samoa?

There was no objection.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I rise in strong support of this proposed resolution, and I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Again, I want to thank the distinguished chairman of our committee, the gentleman from California (Mr. LANTOS), and our senior ranking member of our committee, the gentlewoman

from Florida (Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN) for their support and their leadership in bringing this important legislation before the floor.

I am pleased to bring to the floor today a bill that will benefit the entire Pacific region. I am honored and proud to sponsor this legislation.

While they may be overlooked when listing our great allies, the United States has long and profound relationships with the Pacific Island nations that stretch back more than two centuries. With consideration of this legislation today, Congress will act to significantly strengthen this vitally important alliance.

The Pacific Island nations have long been integral to our strategic interests, from the vital role they played in the Pacific theatre of operations during World War II to their critical role that they played in the conduct of our nuclear testing and missile defense system that even today is critical to our overall military and strategic interests in this important region of the world.

We work closely with the nations of the Pacific to combat transnational threats, particularly the rapidly increasing peril posed by global warming. The people of the Pacific have also fought and sacrificed side-by-side with American soldiers in conflicts from World War II to the current war in Iraq.

But as we look towards the Pacific, we must step up both our multilateral and bilateral relationships to provide critically needed assistance to ensure that other countries do not fill the void. Foreign assistance and scholarship offerings from other countries to the Pacific Island nations has increased dramatically in recent years. Such aid comes with few requirements for good governance and few environmental or labor standards.

The bottom line, Madam Speaker, our public diplomacy program and educational and cultural exchanges with the Pacific Island nations is shameful and without excuse.

Left unchecked, such foreign assistance from other countries can cause further instability, leaving these island nations to believe the United States no longer is interested to assist them, and thereby leave them vulnerable to establish friendships with countries that do not necessarily support our interests in this vast region of the world.

We must act now to fill the void and exert our influence. The Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act of 2007 seeks to address the development needs of our allies in the Pacific Islands and to engage the United States in the region more deeply.

This legislation pushes for greater activity in the Pacific Islands by authorizing the administrator of the U.S. Agency for International Development to listen to the needs of the leaders of the Pacific Islands and to provide assistance accordingly. This task would be significantly easier if USAID rees-

tablished a serious presence in the Pacific Island region, something that has been long overdue.

The legislation also authorizes funds to increase the number of Fulbright scholars from the Pacific islands, making use of our most successful international educational program to increase the training of future leaders of the Pacific Islands. Fostering educational opportunities overseas is one of this government's strongest and most effective public diplomacy tools. Leveraging these grants would represent a tremendous way of reengaging with these critical allies in the Pacific region.

Under section 2 of this bill now entitled Pacific Island Country Exchanges, it is the intent of Congress to specifically increase funding for the U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship program, a program which has been in place since 1994, and has been administered by the East-West Center in Honolulu under the direction of the U.S. Department of State. The U.S.-South Pacific Scholarship program has successfully trained many Pacific Island leaders, and it is imperative to U.S. interests in the region that we continue this program.

In this new world where shipping is vulnerable to terrorism and climate change is a top priority, we need these Pacific Island nations as much as they need us. Let's commit to reengaging with them, to strengthening our alliances with them, and to aiding them in every way possible.

I urge my colleagues to support this bill.

Madam Speaker, I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. ROS-LEHTINEN. Madam Speaker, I yield myself such time as I may consume.

Madam Speaker, I rise in support of H.R. 3062, the Pacific Island Economic and Educational Development Act. The island nations of the South Pacific, which include longstanding friends of the United States, face continuing challenges in development and education.

I want to commend the chairman of the Subcommittee on Asia, the Pacific and the Global Environment (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for his leadership in introducing this legislation and for working with us in the committee to refine it during the committee process.

Because the amended text deals with authorizations, not mandates or appropriations, it signals congressional interest in deepening our cooperation with the people of the Pacific Islands, while also allowing executive branch agencies appropriate discretion in carrying out such programs.

The text before us will increase the amounts authorized for U.S. educational and cultural exchanges with South Pacific nations to \$1 million in each of the next 2 fiscal years, establish a Fulbright exchange program for Pacific Island students, and underscore the interests of the United States Congress in making appropriate USAID

technical assistance available to Pacific Island governments.

I thank the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) for accommodating some of our suggested changes. I am pleased to support the amended text.

Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I yield back the balance of my time.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The question is on the motion offered by the gentleman from American Samoa (Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA) that the House suspend the rules and pass the bill, H.R. 3062, as amended.

The question was taken; and (two-thirds being in the affirmative) the rules were suspended and the bill, as amended, was passed.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

#### UNITED STATES-POLAND PARLIAMENTARY YOUTH EXCHANGE PROGRAM ACT OF 2007

Mr. FALEOMAVAEGA. Madam Speaker, I move to suspend the rules and pass the Senate bill (S. 377) to establish a United States-Poland parliamentary youth exchange program, and for other purposes.

The Clerk read the title of the Senate bill.

The text of the Senate bill is as follows:

S. 377

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act of 2007".

#### SEC. 2. FINDINGS.

Congress makes the following findings:

(1) The United States established diplomatic relations with the newly-formed Polish Republic in April 1919.

(2) The United States and Poland have enjoyed close bilateral relations since 1989.

(3) Poland became a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) in March 1999.

(4) Poland became a member of the European Union (EU) in May 2004.

(5) Poland has been a strong supporter, both diplomatically and militarily, of efforts led by the United States to combat global terrorism and has contributed troops to the United States-led coalitions in both Afghanistan and Iraq.

(6) Poland cooperates closely with the United States on such issues as democratization, nuclear proliferation, human rights, regional cooperation in Eastern Europe, and reform of the United Nations.

(7) The United States and Poland seek to ensure enduring ties between both governments and societies.

(8) It is important to invest in the youth of the United States and Poland in order to help ensure long-lasting ties between both societies.

(9) It is in the interest of the United States to preserve a United States presence in Europe and to continue to contribute to the development of transatlantic relationships.

(10) Poland for many years received international and United States financial assistance and is now determined to invest its own